UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1992/80
1 July 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1992
29 June-31 July 1992
Agenda item 19 (b)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

World summit for social development

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Economic and Social Council, by its decision 1991/230 of 30 May 1991, taking into account the report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-second session (chap. I, sect. C) and bearing in mind the discussions held in the Second (Social) Committee at its first regular session of 1991, decided to request the Secretary-General to carry out consultations with all States Members of the United Nations on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development and to report to it on the matter at its substantive session of 1992.

2. In July 1991, the Secretary-General requested Mr. Juan Somavia, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, to carry out these consultations on his behalf, and to report on the results prior to the substantive session of the Council of 1992.

3. Subsequently, at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 46/139 on social development, in which the Assembly, taking into account the debate in the Third Committee on the item entitled "Social development" and the widespread support expressed for the world summit for social development and for the consultations under way, welcomed Council decision 1991/230, as well as the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to carry out the consultations on his behalf, and invited the Special Representative to take due note in his report to the Secretary-General of the points of view expressed in the General Assembly and in the Third Committee on the world summit for social development. The Assembly called upon Governments to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative by participating actively in these consultations, and also requested the concerned organs, organizations and

programmes of the United Nations system to assist the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in the consultations. The Assembly called upon the Council, after considering the report of the Secretary-General requested by Council decision 1991/230, to make an appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

4. In the intervening period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has had extensive consultations with representatives of Governments in all regions, as well as organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. Governments, furthermore have conveyed their views in writing in response to the note verbale of 3 April 1992 of the Secretary-General on the subject of Economic and Social Council decision 1991/230.

5. The report of the Special Representative on the results of his extensive consultations carried out on behalf of the Secretary-General is annexed to the present note. The report includes a synthesis of the views and comments made by Governments in the debate in plenary and the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and in the summit meeting of the Security Council of 31 January 1992, together with opinions formally or informally transmitted to the Special Representative.

6. The consultations confirmed that there is widespread support in all regions for the convening of a world summit for social development.

7. As emphasized in the report of the Special Representative, a world summit for social development could provide leadership at the highest level for a shared world-wide commitment to put people at the centre of development and international cooperation. It could also enhance world peace and security by giving political impetus to satisfying social needs as an integral part of efforts for greater national and international stability. Moreover, such a summit could provide an important opportunity to develop a common framework for a more comprehensive approach to United Nations actions in this sphere. In order to be successful, it would need to deal with a well-focused agenda of interest to all States Members of the United Nations, through an effective and well-managed preparatory process that would ensure a politically significant and action-oriented outcome, monitored by efficient follow-up procedures.

Annex

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVENING A WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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I. MANDATE

1. The initiative of convening a world summit for social development was proposed by the Chairman of the Social Committee at the first regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1991. Following the proposal, the Council adopted without a vote decision 1991/230, by which it requested the Secretary-General to carry out consultations with all Member States on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development, and to submit a report on these consultations to the substantive session of the Council in 1992.

2. In July 1991, the then Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar requested Juan Somavia, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, to carry out these consultations on his behalf, and to report to him prior to the substantive session of the Council in 1992. The mandate of the Special Representative was confirmed by Boutros Boutros-Ghali upon his election as Secretary-General.

3. At its forty-sixth session in 1991, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 46/139 on social development, which welcomed the adoption of Council decision 1991/230, took note of the widespread support expressed for the world summit for social development and the ongoing process of consultations, and called upon the Council at its substantive session for 1992 to make a recommendation on this issue to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. It also requested Governments to participate actively in the consultations.

4. The present report is a synthesis of the results of extensive consultations carried out on behalf of the Secretary-General, including views and comments made by Governments in the general debate and in the Third Committee of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, together with opinions formally or informally transmitted to the Special Representative. The report reflects the backing given to the world summit for social development by the Ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 in September of 1991, the decision by the Ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries in May of 1992, which urges international support for the convening of a world summit for social development and the significant backing voiced at the summit meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992.

5. The synthesis also encapsulates the significant and widespread support in all regions for the convening of the world summit for social development, to be held in early 1995 as an integral part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the United Nations.

6. It further underscores the view that for the summit to be successful, it must deal with a concise and limited agenda of interest to all Member States of the United Nations, through an effective and well-managed preparatory process that can ensure an appropriate political and action-oriented outcome, monitored by efficient follow-up procedures.

II. REASONING FOR THE CONVENING OF A WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. An analysis of the problem

7. Recent significant developments in the political and security fields, including advances in human rights and democracy, the elimination of super-Power nuclear confrontation, the overall reduction of military expenditures and the emergence of new States have elicited a positive response from the world community. The Security Council has assumed new relevance, and the role of the Secretary-General in promoting collective security generally has been expanded. While these developments have not prevented tensions and actual conflicts from emerging from new situations, their potential to escalate into global confrontation has been significantly reduced by the end of the cold war.

8. Unfortunately, the other side of the coin has not been given the same degree of political importance, that is, what is happening to the standards of living of the world's peoples. Although very significant efforts have been made at the national and international level in the social field, and important success stories have been registered in many countries, the fact is that globally there are today more poor people, more unemployed and greater social insecurity than 10 years ago. This situation affects both developed and developing countries, although the dimensions of the problem are greater and their impact is felt more acutely in the developing world. Social development problems are truly global in scope, as is evidenced by the vast numbers of people suffering in too many places in the world. The greater sense of global political security is therefore to be contrasted in many instances with a sense of growing individual insecurity. The death of 40,000 children a day is a stark reminder.

9. Security is interdependent. There will not be long-term security and stability in developed countries without security and stability in developing countries. This is equally valid between the affluent and poor sectors within a single country. Migration is the clearest manifestation of this: if people do not find security where they are born, they look for it where they think they can find it (from rural to urban areas, from one country to another or from one continent to another).

10. Still, migration continues to be an outlet for coping with individual insecurity. A much more serious problem, however, is the build-up of tensions within countries brought about by unbearable living conditions. These tensions have the potential to erupt in violence and to cause serious dislocations, as has already occurred in developing and developed countries alike.

11. The unchecked growth of poverty and unemployment with the resulting sense of marginalization and frustration are a permanent source of political instability. In addition, there is concern that these conditions are negatively affecting social cohesion, community integration and family

structures, with serious impact on values and human relations. There is a feeling that existing institutions and policies are not coping adequately with contemporary social needs, leading to different forms of dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs. This sense of "disenchantment" expresses itself in certain sectors in social conduct ranging from ethnic and religious strife to drug consumption and a growing disinterest in public affairs and traditional politics. There is a surging preoccupation with open and latent forms of racism under the guise of migration policies in different societies.

12. Individual well-being is perceived not only as a question of satisfying basic needs, but also as the aspiration to enhance the non-material and qualitative aspects of a full and rewarding life as members of a stable community.

13. These issues are not new. In the absence of the cold war, however, they are likely to be among the principal sources of national and international tensions for the present and into the twenty-first century. A world that is naturally relieved that the spectre of super-Power nuclear confrontation has been put to rest, must now take cognizance of a social bomb that also has potentially devastating consequences.

14. This is felt acutely in developing countries and, more recently, in countries in transition to open economies and democratic systems. In looking at what is commonly referred to as the "social cost" of structural adjustment policies, it can be appreciated that there are limits beyond which any economic advantage gained is offset by the political instability generated and the danger it poses to social gains and new-found liberties. The way can therefore be open for relapses into authoritarian rule. This reality gives the idea of "adjustment with a human face", developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), further legitimacy.

15. Today there is a growing consensus on what are the basic components of economic efficiency. It is equally important to identify the essential components of social efficiency in different economic and cultural settings. It is necessary to address in creative ways the interaction between the "social safety net" function of the State, innovative market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development.

16. Security is gradually being perceived as a comprehensive and integrated concept. The Security Council, in its meeting of 31 January 1992, stated that "peace and prosperity are indivisible and that lasting peace and security require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom". This points to the fact that there are sources of insecurity which the competent socio-economic bodies of the United Nations system need to address preventively so that they do not become traditional security problems.

17. Taken as a whole the process leading up to the world summit for social development, the political significance of the summit itself, and the follow-up procedures to ensure the implementation of its decisions, can be seen as a major contribution to greater international stability.

18. It is felt that the world is facing today a unique opportunity to deal with these problems with a renewed sense of urgency and a spirit of cooperation in addressing shared concerns and that the summit for social development can become a breakthrough on the road to a more humane world. The issues outlined also highlight the need for the summit to be convened at the level of heads of State and/or government.

19. It is normally the responsibility of the heads of State and/or government to establish priorities between different social needs and to arbitrate among conflicting demands coming from ministries to meet social needs that are usually greater than available resources. As this has extensive political implications at the national level, it is one of the principal decision-making responsibilities of heads of State and/or government.

20. Equally as important, the heads of State and/or government can upgrade the importance given to social development in the international agenda by making a strong political statement. They can act as catalysts for a global commitment to action to improve as a matter of priority the quality of life of people everywhere, thus helping to determine the shape of the post-cold war society.

21. The spirit of prevailing opinions was best summed up by a head of State who quoted Ralph J. Bunche's acceptance speech of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950: "Peace is no mere matter of men fighting or not fighting. Peace, to have meaning for many who have known only suffering in both peace and war, must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, health, and education, as well as freedom and human dignity - a steadily better life. If peace is to be secure, long-suffering and long-starved, forgotten peoples of the world, the underprivileged and the undernourished, must begin to realize without delay the promise of a new day and a new life". He concluded saying "This is what the Social Summit is about. As leaders we have a collective responsibility to act now".

B. Objectives of the summit

22. Beyond cultural, religious, historical, ethical and socio-economic differences, all societies share some fundamental human values and have many common outlooks. These can be encapsulated in the belief that the objective of governing and of international cooperation is to improve the conditions of life of individual human beings. The security or insecurity of people is in the end result the ultimate test of the success or failure in these endeavours. People are the principal and ultimate resource of nations. Sustainable development must enhance human well-being in harmony with nature.

23. In this context, the summit should serve to:

(a) Further the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations by reaffirming, within clear political guidelines, greater system-wide effectiveness "to promote social progress and better standards of life in

larger freedom", and to "employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples";

(b) Give political leadership and express a shared world-wide commitment to put people at the centre of development and of international cooperation as a major component of the emerging new international relations;

(c) Enhance world peace and security through greater social peace by giving political impetus to the satisfaction of social needs as an integral part of the efforts for greater national and international stability;

(d) Unleash latent potential for public and private social development initiatives at the national level. Given that social policies are specific to national traditions, cultural needs and constitute primarily a national responsibility. Countries should be motivated to utilize the opportunity presented by the preparatory process leading to the summit for national consensus-building in this crucial area and to deepen the national commitment to the plight of the underprivileged. In this regard, focus can be given to identifying and promoting the many significant ways in which the private sector, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, churches and religious denominations, the academic community and civil society in general may assist in advancing social development;

(e) Reach agreement on policies, goals and priority actions that could be taken nationally and internationally to address in different development realities, some major issues of shared global concern such as alleviation and reduction of poverty, enhancement of employment opportunities and promotion of greater social cohesion;

(f) Create international awareness of and address the modalities to attain the necessary balance between economic efficiency and social efficiency in a growth-oriented and sustainable development environment of open economic systems. Open economies and equity among individuals and nations should be seen as two sides of the same coin;

(g) Consider ways in which the market can be used to address social needs, based on experience to date, and determine innovative and creative ways in which it may respond to social challenges for the future;

(h) Conceptualize the political, social and economic dimensions of social development in a way that would reflect current realities, including the dramatic changes taking place in the world. The summit provides the opportunity to assemble the best minds and sources of policy analysis with a view to determining the relevance of current development thinking and practice to contemporary social needs; reinforcing those concepts which remain cogent; refocusing those that are ineffective under present circumstances; and promoting new solutions to long-standing problems.

III. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE SUMMIT

24. Social development is a broad concept. It is not conceivable that all of its dimensions can be addressed in the context of the world summit for social development. It is essential, therefore, to focus the scope of the summit on a limited number of precisely stated, concisely formulated "core issues" that are considered by different countries to be priority areas in which positive action will improve the actual conditions of life for the more disadvantaged sectors of society.

25. Setting a cogent agenda of core issues that is both practical and action-oriented is a critical function of the General Assembly resolution launching the social summit as of the preparatory process itself. Purely theoretical or ideological debate on the concept of social development is not thought to be useful, and is therefore best avoided. The consultations have resulted in the formulation of a wide range of possible issues. None the less, there is a clear understanding that they need to be reduced to a limited and workable number of crucial areas where the summit can make a political and practical difference.

26. Among the principal issues mentioned in the consultations are the following:

27. Gender discrimination and other issues related to the equality and participation of women; adequate availability of food and housing; qualitative and quantitative improvement in health care and educational opportunities; the situation of children and the elderly; crime prevention and criminal justice; appropriate population policies and consumption patterns to alleviate pressures on scarce resources; the situation of handicapped people; production, consumption and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; spread of AIDS and implications of the migration processes.

28. The notion of good governance was also raised. As developed to this point, the concept includes the recognition of the limits of government action; sound economic management (including appropriate levels of military spending, and responsible fiscal and monetary policies); and positive social policies.

29. The need to address social issues in the context of the overall development process and the different linkages to economic policies was also highlighted.

30. Selecting from these the core issues points to the natural advantages of the United Nations in the social field. On all issues mentioned, the Organization is well advanced in the identification of targets, goals and objectives approved by the international community. It is worth recalling, as examples, the Plan of Action for the World Summit for Children of UNICEF; the plan for Health for All by the Year 2000 of the World Health Organization (WHO); the plan for Education for All by the Year 2000 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the

population objectives of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the successive world conferences on women and development.

31. Three major problem areas were repeatedly mentioned as synthesizing the main issues involved, requiring urgent action and being relevant to developing and developed countries alike: alleviation and reduction of poverty with particular emphasis on the feminization of poverty and the situation of children and elderly; generation of productive employment, including investment in human resources and strengthening social cohesion.

32. Some criteria for setting the agenda were commonly shared:

(a) Subjects should be of national political importance in the social field. They should be easily understood as significant;

(b) Issues chosen should be of interest to both developed and developing countries;

(c) A practical approach identifying bottlenecks and main difficulties in social policy formulation and implementation should be fostered and the questions addressed: Where are the main obstacles and what experience do we have in solving them?

(d) Special attention should be given to issues of interest to least developed countries in general and to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors in all societies, highlighting the need to improve the external environment for social development;

(e) Enhancement of the importance and effectiveness of the United Nations system in social development should appear prominently.

IV. POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT

33. The consultations highlighted that the summit should not be seen only as an "event" or a "conference" but as a process which gets under way the moment that the General Assembly convenes it and lasts beyond its actual celebration through follow-up procedures. Consequently, the "Objectives" mentioned in paragraph 21 of the present report could be achieved in different stages of the process.

34. For example, the mere decision to convene the summit for social development would open the way for greater relevance being given to social issues in national administrations and international decision-making. Also, it would stimulate the United Nations system as a whole to strengthen cooperation around agenda items; non-governmental organizations would be activated; multilateral lending institutions would seek ways to cooperate with the United Nations and a score of actions would take place in and out of government. Not least among them would be the increase of global consciousness of the significance of the issues addresssed by it.

35. At this stage it is not possible to identify in a precise way the exact form in which the summit should express its conclusions. This will be determined by the preparatory process, with the participation of the membership of the United Nations.

36. Nevertheless, identifying some possible outcomes has been a primary objective of the consultations. Some general directions have been discerned and some possible outcomes suggested that should facilitate the preparatory process and make it both practical and action-oriented. These include:

A. Political statement

37. A political statement would include some of the following elements:

(a) A call for greater national and international focus on social development policies in all societies, underscoring the need to balance economic efficiency and social efficiency through growth-oriented sustainable development policies based on social equity;

(b) Enhancement of the role of social development as an integral part of the overall development process, by emphasizing the interrelationship between political and social stability at the national level and peace and security at the international level, within a comprehensive and integral concept of security;

(c) Considering investment in people not simply as a non-refundable budgetary expenditure but essentially as an economic investment indispensable to ensuring future growth and development and the modernization of economic structures, highlighting the human dimension of economic development;

(d) Making the delivery of social services more efficient by focusing them on the more disadvantaged sectors of society;

(e) Stimulation of international cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level, through governmental, private and non-governmental initiatives.

B. Plan of action

38. A plan of action should identify priority areas for action, together with specific measures for achieving objectives in these areas. The underlying aim should be to meet the global requirement of ensuring the satisfaction of basic needs and the improvement of the quality of life of people in all countries and societies through key selective actions centred on the alleviation and reduction of poverty, the promotion of policies that enhance employment opportunities, improve human resources and foster social cohesion.

39. This plan of action would be geared towards the development of a United Nations integrated programme for social development which, while respecting the decision-making autonomy of each organ, agency and programme, could give common guidelines that would promote greater integration of projects and programmes at the operational level.

40. There is consensus that a main objective of the summit is to reinforce the United Nations system, and make it more effective and not to create new institutions.

41. In this context, a limited number of initiatives to be launched during the summit may be identified in each field that could benefit from close cooperation. The idea of preparing a list of social targets to be achieved in a given time-frame should be considered. It could include both national and international aspects of social development. This, together with the follow-up mechanism that it entails, would represent an element of continuity for the summit's achievements.

42. Inputs for the plan of action could come, as appropriate, from four major sources:

(a) Sectoral goals and objectives already approved by Governments in the various specialized agencies and United Nations programmes (following stock-taking, identifying bottlenecks and implementation problems);

(b) Relevant conclusions of international conferences whose preparations are already under way, e.g. the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992); the World Conference on Human Rights (1993); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); and the fourth international conference on women (1995);

(c) Regional programmes of action for social development;

(d) The proposals of the preparatory process of the summit.

43. The plan of action could also include a comparative analysis of social policies and welfare models in different development, cultural and political contexts, to identify successful initiatives that may be adapted for use in other countries. This could lead to a major international effort to promote technical cooperation in the formulation of national policies for social development with particular emphasis on the exchange of experiences among developing countries, making the summit a "global market-place for social initiatives".

C. The possible formulation of a national commitment for social development

44. Each country would prepare its formulation in which relevant governmental, political, private and social sectors of society would participate. This could be announced at the summit as an expression of the

political commitment of nations as a whole to give the highest priority to social development issues. Public and private voluntary initiatives and commitments at the national, regional and international levels could also be announced in the context of the summit.

D. Mobilizing greater resources for social development

45. Beyond the identification of the main social problems affecting humankind and the political leadership the summit can give in order to reach major goals and objectives in this field, lies the question of the necessary resources to make this possible. Consultations have given the following directions on this matter.

1. At the national level

46. The summit, with its objective of highlighting the political importance of social development, is seen as a major boost to ministries in charge of social issues in their efforts to increase their participation in the national budget while respecting the need for macroeconomic equilibrium.

47. The idea of utilizing the summit as a basis for consensus-building and national commitment for social development can generate new internal resources including private voluntary contributions, and agreements on measures to stimulate better income distribution, without affecting the capacity for sustainable growth in each national economy.

48. Maximizing the efficiency of social programmes in terms of better targeting of initiatives towards the underprivileged and of enhancing their delivery capacity, can result in greater impact within existing means.

2. At the bilateral level

49. Both donor and recipient countries can decide in their own bilateral dealings to increase the relative importance of the social sector or to augment the overall cooperation flows earmarked for these activities resulting from the political importance given to this sector by the summit.

3. At the multilateral level

50. The decision to convene the summit and initiate the preparatory process can have an indirect effect on the lending policies of multilateral financial institutions. There is already an evolution towards more awareness of the human implications of structural adjustment measures which could be reinforced by the summit, particularly in relation to the situation of least developed countries.

51. The significance of reinforcing United Nations institutions in the social field by innovative approaches will have to be considered; for example, the possibility of increasing private contributions for United Nations initiatives; the promotion of social development campaigns in developed countries for poverty alleviation in developing countries; the identification of social projects as part of the already existing system of "sister cities" cooperation between developed and developing countries to be implemented through United Nations mechanisms; the incorporation of social objectives in investment projects. These and other similar possibilities may be considered in this context.

52. The deepening understanding of the peace and security implications of social development resulting from the preparatory process of the summit can lead many developed countries to conclude that investing in the security of the developing countries, through assistance for effective development programmes, can be a highly productive investment with regard to the long-term security of the developed countries. It can be a unique opportunity to address the question of international resource flows from a new and forward-looking political perspective.

53. Recognizing the importance and the need to address this issue, the view was expressed that it was necessary to do so in such a way that it did not become the centre of the discussion, giving the summit an exclusive North-South dimension, thus losing the benefits for all to address social development from a global perspective.

V. BASIC DOCUMENTATION

54. A vast amount of documentation exists at the international and regional levels, which can be utilized in the preparation of the summit. Those documents which may be considered in this context can include: General Assembly resolutions 2542 (XXIV) containing the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and 42/125 endorsing the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future; the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for its Implementation adopted by the World Summit for Children; the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade; the Cartagena Declaration of UNCTAD VIII; the Report on the World Social Situation; the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the World Bank's World Development Report, 1990; which is dedicated to the issue of poverty; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region towards the Year 2000 and Beyond.

VI. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

55. It is a fact that people are looking to the United Nations for leadership in the post-cold war era. The reality is that in vital areas, including peacemaking and peace-keeping among and within States, the Organization is already providing such leadership. The demand for the same leadership in the field of social development is becoming increasingly evident. The Organization is challenged to address a central question: how can the United Nations system become more useful in improving the conditions of life of the underprivileged sectors in all societies?

56. The comparative advantages of the United Nations, from both the technical and political standpoints, makes it the logical forum for taking a comprehensive approach to social development issues, and for giving social development the renewed impetus and the political importance it merits. United Nations membership is virtually universal. It has built up, in a manner similar to the domestic organizational structure of States, a complex network of institutions, programmes and mechanisms, which extend across the spectrum of social problems and issues. Among the issues specifically covered are: food, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); health (WHO); education (UNESCO); housing, The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); employment, The International Labour Organisation (ILO); drug abuse control, the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP); women, The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ((INSTRAW), together with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs); children (UNICEF); and UNDP, which integrates dimensions of these various areas into development projects. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna acts as the focal point within the Secretariat on social issues. The Department for Economic and Social Development addresses social questions as part of its policy analysis and technical cooperation tasks. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has recently been given a mandate to deal with poverty issues. As a whole, then, the United Nations system has unique field experience unmatched by any other private or public international organization.

57. The United Nations Charter, however, gives the Organization, through the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council a mandate to address economic and social issues as a whole, and to promote development as a major objective of the Organization. This underscores the fact that social and economic development cannot be neatly separated into different analytical categories, since development is an integral process, encompassing both dimensions in an integrated manner. The United Nations has launched four successive development decades since the 1960s as an expression of its responsibility in the field of overall development. The focus that should be given to social development issues in the context of the summit, therefore, should be in the interest of creating a balance between the economic and social dimensions of development.

58. Social development issues have natural linkages with economic issues and cannot be discussed effectively unless they are considered. There are economic questions that naturally flow from the subjects the summit will address, and will be a part of the analysis. However, it is considered that the summit should not become an instance for global negotiations on all social and economic aspects of development.

59. From this perspective close collaboration among the organs of the United Nations system will be necessary, including, with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the regional banks and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which have specific responsibilities for negotiating monetary, financial and trade issues. These organs could work in greater harmony on a development agenda geared to meet the needs and concerns of all countries, with general directions agreed at the political level through the United Nations.

60. This approach would also reinforce the distinct advantages of both the United Nations and the multilateral financial and trade institutions in their own fields of action.

61. The active participation of all specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations will be crucial to the preparatory process of the summit, to the summit itself and to the follow-up procedures.

62. A unique opportunity is provided, in this regard, to enhance the importance of the United Nations system with general policy directions on social issues being decided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, overall coordination being carried out by the Secretary-General, and the collective efforts of the specialized agencies and other organs and programmes of the system, yielding more comprehensive, integrated results on the basis of greater interaction between their autonomous decision-making bodies.

VII. PREPARATORY PROCESS

63. The consultations resulted in a generally held view that the effectiveness of the preparatory process leading up to the world summit for social development was fundamental to ensuring a successful outcome. In this regard, the following criteria were indicated as crucial to attain the aforementioned objective:

(a) The preparatory process should be efficient in terms of the utilization of time, human and financial resources. Also, a competent and experienced management structure appears as indispensable. The need for a negotiating environment conducive to executive procedures and consensus decisions on substantive issues was highlighted;

(b) The preparatory process should establish, as soon as possible, a direct link with the heads of State and/or Government in order to reflect the essentially political character of the process and the high level nature of the undertaking;

(c) The United Nations system as a whole should be utilized, as appropriate, for the technical underpinning of the issues to be discussed.

64. It was considered that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for 1992 should comply with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 46/139 to formulate a recommendation for the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the possibility of convening a world summit for social development.

65. As expressed in paragraph 5 above, the consultations indicate that there is significant and widespread support in all regions for the convening of a world summit for social development at the level of heads of State or Government, to be held in early 1995, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. A view was put forward that the format of the summit was not appropriate to the objectives pursued.

66. It was also considered that it be incumbent upon the General Assembly, first to pronounce itself on the recommendation of the Council and, should it decide to convene the summit, to adopt the necessary decisions regarding the organization of it. This should include: the modalities of the summit, in particular a concise agenda and an efficient preparatory process, together with the relevant financial implications. Also, it should establish a preparatory committee composed of representatives of the heads of State and/or Government, to be convened in late 1993, in order to prepare the substantive and procedural stages of the summit. Taking into account the interrelated nature of the issues involved in social development, a small secretariat unit to assist the preparatory process and to service the preparatory committee should be established.

67. Furthermore, it is suggested that the recommendation to be adopted by the Council should include a request addressed to the Commission for Social Development to consider at its thirty-third session in 1993 the world summit for social development. A view was expressed that the whole issue of such a summit meeting should first be considered by the Commission before a decision was taken by the Council and the General Assembly. The Council should also decide that the high-level and coordination segments of the substantive session for 1993 should consider this matter.

68. The successive steps mentioned above would ensure that by the time the preparatory committee is convened, sufficient exchange of opinions would have taken place in order to focus, in practical operational terms, on the content and method of its work.

69. For the summit to achieve its important goals, it will be essential to undertake national-level preparations. Therefore it seems advisable that national committees be established in all countries with the participation of all relevant governmental, political, non-governmental, private and social sectors which would serve as a focal point for preparatory activities of the summit.